

## **Self-Expression=Self-Definition**

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One of the most prominent aspects of teenagers is their desire not only to express themselves, but the various creative ways in which they go about doing so. One of the most consistent themes across the decades of teenage experiences was the need to separate from the restraints of childhood during this delicate transitional period, a limbo between childhood and becoming an adult. The only part of this that changes as time progresses is the ways in which teenagers go about separating. For example, for a teenage girl to wear pants to school in the 1960s would have been a rebellious action, but now tattoos and body piercing are popular forms of revolt.

The strong emotions and feelings consistent with the teenage years make for some very interesting forms of self-expression. Whether a teenager is simply writing in their journal or performs their writing pieces at poetry slams or open mics, they are expressing their inner emotions through an artistic outlet. Many of the most important works of literature have been written by teenagers, which makes sense seeing as it is such a sensitive, vulnerable part of one's life, writing being a creative outlet for this mix of feelings. Emotions and feelings are what, after all, steers the creative process, and makes for good writing. For example, Anne Frank (a teenager), who in experiencing the terrors of the Holocaust produced one of the most famous and greatest works of nonfiction literature ever written: *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

The teenage years comprise a period of experiences and absorption of what, to many, is a whole new world with newfound freedom. It is a well-known fact that teenagers, for the most part, enjoy all aspects of music, movies, and other sensory experiences. We teens are especially sensitive to feelings and by the time people become adults, they are either too busy or too old to really appreciate certain aspects of life over which teenagers obsess. Self-expression through writing and performance has always, and always will be an extremely important facet of the teenage experience.